DIME Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated: October 2, 2002
New questions are put at the end of this list.

QUESTION

Is there financial support available for teams selected to build and operate their experiment?

ANSWER

Funding for designing and building the team's experiment is not available from NASA. The DIME program does provide the following to each selected team:

- travel funds, hotel room cost, and per diem for four student team representatives and one adult advisor to visit NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio for the three days of DIME Drop Days in April,
- mounting adaptor plate on which the experiment is built,
- required electrical connectors that connect with the DIME drop rig in the drop tower, and
- a shipping container in which the experiment is shipped to NASA.

You could contact the director of your state's space grant consortium and ask if there are grants available. A directory of the contacts is available on this WWW page from the link labelled *CONTACT DATABASE*.

`http://calspace.ucsd.edu/spacegrant/NASAspacegrant.html`

The National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program

Established by Congress in 1988 and implemented by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1989, the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program (also known as Space Grant) contributes to the nation's science enterprise by funding research, education, and public service projects through a national network of 52 university-based Space Grant consortia. These consortia administer programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The consortia's 703 affiliates include 493 academic institutions and 62 businesses. Other partners include state and local government agencies, other federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Space Grant celebrates its tenth year of service in 1999. Since its inception, Space Grant has awarded over 12,000 U.S. citizens with tuition assistance in science, engineering, and related fields of study.

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QUESTION

May combustion be used in an experiment?

ANSWER

Yes, but all proposed combustion experiments will be reviewed by a NASA panel on a case-by-case basis. This is not meant to discourage combustion experiments, but rather to ensure safe operations of the experiment and the drop tower. Any chemical by-products shall be contained within the experimental apparatus.

QUESTION

Can liquids other than water be used in an experiment?

ANSWER

Yes, but dangerous or hazardous chemicals or chemical reaction products shall not be used in the experiment. Any chemicals, especially liquids, shall be contained within the experimental apparatus.

QUESTION

Can an insect, such as a cricket, be used in an experiment?

ANSWER

Such biological samples shall not be used in the experiment. Common household products made from biological materials, such as paper or cotton clothing apparel, may be used.

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QUESTION

If a team pays their own expenses, may more than four students or more than one adult come to NASA for the three day activities? ... or just for the drop itself?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to host additional team members at NASA during the Drop Days. This is due to limited space available for the planned activities, especially the 2.2 Second Drop Tower itself. NASA has some of the activities available for the remainder of the team at "home" via web casting. Check the DIME web page.

QUESTION

What is the weight of the mounting adapter plate?

ANSWER

The mounting adaptor plate weighs 6.8 pounds. Consult the DIME Experiment Requirements Document for further details and a company reference.

QUESTION

The Educator's Guide states we should keep up to date with the DIME web site as technical details may change. What types of changes do you anticipate? How will this affect our experiment proposal?

ANSWER

We do not anticipate major changes to the technical specifications. The formal rules for the competition should be obtained in late-summer to ensure your team has the appropriate version of entry rules and forms before finalizing and submitting their proposal.

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QUESTION

I wondered if students could use the microgravity drop tower for science fair experiments? My Honors Physics students are required to do a science fair project every year as part of their course requirement.

ANSWER

The 2.2 Second Drop Tower (as other NASA facilities) is reserved for NASA, university, and commercial investigators. It is not open to individual high school projects. We have started the DIME project to offer (at least in a limited way) the opportunity for high-school-aged students to accomplish research in this way.

QUESTION

I teach three classes in high school. Can each of my classes form a team and develop independent proposals?

ANSWER

Yes, a school may submit multiple proposals. Each team's entry package needs to be complete and stand-alone. Please follow the instructions for submitting proposals so each team's entry package is complete.

QUESTION

My students are confused as to whether the proposal should be written in a paragraph format or whether it should be written more in an outline format (like shown on page 3 of the program announcement). Could you please send more detail on how the proposal format should be written?

ANSWER

Paragraph/narrative format is great! We listed in outline form just to be 'specific' about what should be included.

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QUESTION

Do students in the DIME program need to be US citizens or will a legal resident with a permanent VISA qualify? The announcement says "legal resident."

ANSWER

U.S. citizens, persons with permanent visas, and persons with 'green cards' are eligible.

Address your question to DIME by e-mail or postal mail:

e-mail: `DIME@grc.nasa.gov`

Postal mail:

NCMR / DIME
NASA GRC, MS 110-3
21000 Brookpark Road
Cleveland, OH 44135

The DIME WWW page is:

`http://microgravity.grc.nasa.gov/DIME.html`